

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 5392

USIA FOR IEU

EO 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT UR

SUBJECT: CONVERSATIONS WITH USA INSTITUTE AND IMEMO ON BILATERAL
RELATIONS

REFS: (A) MOSCOW 5082, (B) MOSCOW 5118

QM SUMMARY. REPEATED CONTACT WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS OF
THE USA INSTITUTE DURING THE WEEK OF MARCH 29, PLUS A MEETING
AT THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD ECONOMICS AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS (IMEMO) APRIL 2, PRODUCED SIGNS OF CONCERN IN
BOTH INSTITUTES OVER THE SHORT-TERM PROSPECTS FOR US-SOVIET
RELATIONS. THE DISCUSSIONS, HIGHLIGHTED BELOW, DEALT WITH
THE US POLITICAL SCENE, ANGOLA, HARASSMENT OF DIPLOMATS,
AND OTHER BILATERAL ISSUES. WE FOUND A HIGHER LEVEL
OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE US IN INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS THAN
IN ARBATOV'S PRAVDA ARTICLE ON US-SOVIET RELATIONS, BUT
EVEN IN INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS SOVIET AMERICANOLOGISTS BETRAY
MANY MISCONCEPTIONS AND BLIND SPOTS. WE WERE ENCOURAGED THAT
INSTITUTE OFFICIALS SOUGHT OUR VIEWS, BUT WE CANNOT
BE SURE HOW FAR UP THE LINE THESE VIEWS WILL PER-
COLATE.

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END SUMMARY.

2. A WEEK OF CONTACTS WITH THE USA INSTITUTE BEGAN WITH THE MARCH 29 VISIT OF DIRECTOR OF THE HARVARD INSTITUTE OF POLITICS JONATHAN MOORE. IN THE MORNING MOORE (ACCOMPANIED BY AN EMBOFF) SPOKE TO ABOUT FORTY INSTITUTE STAFFERS, AND SIX SPECIALISTS ON THE AMERICAN DOMESTIC SCENE FROM THE MFA'S USA DIVISION, ON THE US ELECTROL PROCESS. ASKED WHY THE PRESIDENT DROPPED THE WORD "DETENTE," MOORE SAID HE CONSIDERED THIS A BRILLIANT TACTICAL STEP DESIGNED TO WIN SUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR CONTINUATION OF A MORE IMPORTANT STRATEGIC POLICY. MOORE REMINDED HIS QUESTIONER THAT THE PRESIDENT MADE CLEAR HE WAS RETIRING THE WORD BUT NOT THE POLICY.

3. MOORE'S MARCH 29 AFTERNOON SESSION AT THE INSTITUTE TOOK AN UNEXPECTED TURN. THE PROGRAM CALLED FOR A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF THE US ELECTIONS, BUT AT THE LAST MOMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR BOGDANOV SUMMONED MOORE FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS. ALSO PRESENT WERE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY IVANYAN, HEAD OF POLITICAL/MILITARY DEPARTMENT MIL'SHTEYN, AND EMBOFF.

4. BOGDANOV ASKED MOORE'S VIEWS ON WHY A SALT II AGREEMENT HAD NOT YET BEEN CONCLUDED AND ON US-SOVIET RELATIONS IN GENERAL. MOORE RESPONDED THAT HE WAS NOT COMPETENT TO DISCUSS SALT BUT FELT THAT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS ANGOLA HAD CUT INTO BROAD AMERICAN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR DETENTE. MOORE FELT AMERICANS WERE NOT CONFIDENT OF IMPROVEMENT IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS AND NEEDED TO SEE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS -- IF NOT CONSTANT ADVANCES, AT LEAST A PATTERN FREE OF THE SORT OF DISRUPTIONS REPRESENTED BY ANGOLA. MOORE STRESSED THAT THE SOVIETS MUST UNDERSTAND HOW THEIR ACTIONS ARE PERCEIVED IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT, AND WHAT IMPACT THESE ACTIONS HAVE ON SUPPORT FOR ADMINISTRATION POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION

5. WHEN HARASSMENT OF US DIPLOMATS IN MOSCOW WAS MENTIONED, BOGDANOV SEEMED TO BECOME UPSET EMOTIONALLY AND SAID HE DID NOT APPROVE OF THREATS AND WOULD LIKE TO

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SEE THE SAFETY OF DIPLOMATS ON BOTH SIDES GUARANTEED. BUT, HE ADDED "YOU AMERICANS MUST UNDERSTAND THAT WE TOO HAVE OUR PUBLIC OPINION PROBLEMS REGARDING SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS*" IVANYAN ADDED THAT INSTITUTE SPEAKERS ON SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS RECENTLY HAD ENCOUNTERED A RELATIVELY HIGH NUMBER OF HOSTILE QUESTIONS REGARDING THE U.S.

6. OUR NEXT CONVERSATION WITH THE USA INSTITUTE WAS BETWEEN BOGDANOV AND COUNSELOR FOR PRESS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS BENSON AT THE PRAGA RESTAURANT MARCH 30. ON THE US ELECTION, BOGDANOV NOTED THAT IN HIS VIEW PRESIDENT FORD WAS "FORCED TO THE RIGHT" BY REAGAN'S CHALLENGE, BUT ADMINISTRATION POLICY (TOWARD THE USSR) WAS SOLID, EVEN THOUGH THE NECESSITIES OF THE CAMPAIGN GAVE "CERTAIN FORCES" IN THE US LEEWAY TO ASSERT THEIR COUNTER-DETENTE VIEWS.

7. BOGDANOV LISTENED CAREFULLY TO BENSON'S PERSONAL VIEWS ON THE HARM INFLICTED UPON THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY OF IMPROVING US-SOVIET RELATIONS BY SOVIET ACTIONS IN ANGOLA. BOGDANOV IMPLIED HE DID NOT AGREE WITH DEPLOYMENT OF CUBAN TROOPS THERE BUT WOULD NOT AGREE THAT THE USSR HAD ASKED FOR THEM--NOR WOULD HE ANSWER WHEN ASKED IF THE CUBANS HAD DEMANDED A SOVIET AIRLIFT TO AFRICA. BOGDANOV HOPED ANGOLA WOULD SOON CEASE TO OCCUPY WORLD ATTENTION; THE USSR PLANNED NO BASES THERE AND, HAVING BEEN BURNED IN ITS AFRICAN RELATIONS ON EARLIER OCCASIONS, THE USSR HAD NO INTENTION OF DEEP INVOLVEMENT ON THE CONTINENT. WHILE HE FELT THE US SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED AT THE SOVIET COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, BOGDANOV SAID HE COULD SEE THAT THE MANNER AND DEGREE MIGHT CONCERN US.

8. WHEN BENSON RAISED THE BOMB THREATS AND OTHER HARASSMENT, BOGDANOV SAID THAT SOVIET "PUBLIC OPINION" WAS NOT AS HIGHLY ORGANIZED AS THE EMBASSY SEEMED TO THINK. THERE WAS "REAL IRRITATION" IN MOSCOW AND IN NEW YORK; INDEED THE MFA HAD RECEIVED "MANY REQUESTS" FOR TRANSFERS FROM THE US BENSON'S DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE US LEGAL SYSTEM SEEMED CONFIDENTIAL

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ENLIGHTENING TO BOGDANOV BUT LEFT HIM UNCONVINCED THE USG WAS DOING ALL POSSIBLE TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION.

9. NEXT CAME A MARCH 31 LUNCHEON HOSTED BY BENSON FOR MOORE, AT WHICH THE EDITOR OF THE USA INSTITUTE'S MONTHLY JOURNAL SSHA, VALENTIN BEREZHKOVA, OBVIOUSLY BRIEFED BY BOGDANOV, IN EFFECT LED BENSON THROUGH THE EARLIER BENSON-BOGDANOV CONVERSATION ON ANGOLA. BEREZHKOVA INSISTED THAT USSR SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WAS TO BE EXPECTED AND THAT THE USSR HAD "INTERESTS" THROUGHOUT THE WORLD--FOR EXAMPLE, THE COUP IN ARGENTINA WAS BEING CLOSELY STUDIED IN MOSCOW. WITH REGARD TO ANGOLA, BEREZHKOVA MADE LITTLE ATTEMPT TO DEFEND SOVIET ACTIONS AND INSTEAD SAID THE ONLY IMPORTANT QUESTION WAS WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE, GIVEN THAT US

SOVIET RELATIONS WERE TOO IMPORTANT TO BE ALLOWED TO
DETERIORATE.

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10. ON APRIL 1 BEREZKHOV HOSTED THE AMBASSADOR AND
EMBOFF AT A LUNCH EARLIER SET UP BY BEREZHKOV IN CONNECTION
WITH AN ARTICLE HE PLANNED TO WRITE FOR THE JUNE ISSUE
OF SSHA ON DETENTE AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS(DETAILS OF THE
CONVERSATION REPORTED BY MEMCON).

THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE FELT 1976 PROMISED TO BE A
CRITICAL YEAR FOR US-SOVIET RELATIONS, AND THE SOVIET
SIDE SHOULD NOT THINK THAT ATTITUDES IN THE US ON
EMIGRATION, ANGOLA, AND OTHER FACETS OF SOVIET POLICY
WERE ONLY SHORT-TERM NEGATIVE PHENOMENA. THESE EX-
PRESSED GENUINE CONCERN, AS DID PERCEPTIONS IN THE
US OF CONTINUING SOVIET BUILD-UP OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS
CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS AND MILITARY FORCES. WHILE NO
SERIOUS CRITIC OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TOWARD THE
USSR FAVORED WAR, SOME WERE ARGUING FOR A STRONGER US
MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND A GENERALLY TOUGHER FOREIGN
POLICY LINE. IN SHORT, A GREAT DEAL DEPENDED UPON WHAT
THE SOVIET UNION DID, BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND ABROAD,
DURING THIS ELECTION YEAR AND BEYOND.

11. ON HARASSMENT OF DIPLOMATS, THE AMBASSADOR DEPLORED
THE ACTIVITIES TAKEN AGAINST SOVIET OFFICIALS IN THE US
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BUT STRESSED THAT SOVIET RETALIATION IN THE USSR COULD
NOT HELP SOVLE THIS SERIOUS PROBLEM. BEREZHKOVA SAID HE
SUPPOSED THE HARASSMENT IN MOSCOW TOOK PLACE BECAUSE "PEOPLE"
FELT US AUTHORITIES DID NOT REGARD THE PROBLEM AS
SUFFICIENTLY SERIOUS. IF IT WERE ACCORDED ENOUGH HIGH-
LEVEL ATTENTION, SURELY HARASSMENT OF SOVIET OFFICIALS
IN THE US COULD BE STOPPED. THE AMBASSADOR ASSURED
BEREZHKOVA THAT THE PROBLEM WAS TAKEN SERIOUSLY, AND US
AUTHORITIES WERE DOING ALL THEY COULD UNDER
US LAW TO RESOLVE IT.

12. MOORE, ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFFS, PARTICIPATED IN A
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH CHIEF OF IMEMO'S FOREIGN
POLICY DEPARTMENT OLEG N. BYKOV AND SEVERAL OF BYKOV'S
YOUNG RESEARCHERS APRIL 2. AFTER MOORE DISCUSSED THE
EFFECT OF ANGOLA UPON THE US ELECTROATE (ALONG THE LINES
OF HIS TALK AT THE USA INSTITUTE, PARA 4 ABOVE), BYKOV
SAID HE FELT THE CRUX OF PRESENT DIFFICULTIES IN US-
SOVIET RELATIONS WAS "MANAGING DETENTE." MANY COMPLEX-
ITIES HAD ARISEN BECAUSE FIRST STEPS IN IMPROVING RELATIONS
HAD COME UP AGAINST OBSTACLES WITH ROOTS MUCH DEEPER THAN
THE PHENOMENON OF US DOMESTIC POLITICS.

13. SEVERAL "OBJECTIVE PROCESSES" HAD INTERTWINED WITH
OUR CURRENT BILATERAL RELATIONS, INCLUDING "RELAXATION OF
INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS," "THE NATIONAL
LIBERATION MOVEMENT," AND "DECOLONIZATION." IN HIS RECENT
SPEECHES SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD TRIED TO CLARIFY THE CON-
CEPT OF DETENTE, TO EXPLAIN WHAT IT WAS AND WHAT IT WAS NOT.
NONETHELESS, ANGOLA HAD BEEN BLOWN OUT OF ALL PROPORTION
IN THE US BECAUSE SOME MISTAKENLY FELT THAT DENTENTE
NEGATED THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT, AND OTHERS ERRED
BY EQUATING DETENTE WITH MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL
STATUS QUO. PERHAPS, BYKOV MUSED, WE WILL BE "SUCKED
BACK INTO THE COLD WAR," DESPITE PROGRESS IN THE
MIDDLE EAST AND ON ARMS CONTROL.

14. COMMENT. SEVERAL TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS EMERGE
FROM THESE CONVERSATIONS. FIRST, OUR CONTACTS WITH THE
USA INSTITUTE SUGGEST AN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO
IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS WHICH CONTRASTS WITH THE
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GENERALLY MORE "SCIENTIFIC," DETACHED ATTITUDE OF IMEMO. SECONDLY, THE CONTRAST BETWEEN ARBATOV'S RELATIVELY TOUGH PUBLIC POSITION AND THE OPINIONS PRIVATELY EXPRESSED BY HIS STAFF SUGGEST THAT ARBATOV AND HIS INSTITUTE DO WHAT THEY CAN TO MODERATE HIGHER-LEVEL, LESS UNDERSTANDING VIEWS REGARDING THE US--THAT IS, WHILE ARBATOV PROBABLY SHARES THE MODERATE OUTLOOK OF HIS STAFF (INDEED, HIS PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH US HAVE UNIFORMLY INDICATED THIS), HE IS FORCED TO TREAD CAREFULLY IN PRESENTING THESE VIEWS TO HIS SUPERIORS. BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE CONVERSATIONS REPORTED ABOVE INDICATE THAT EVEN SOVIET SPECIALISTS ON THE US HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO TOWARD GENUINE UNDERSTANDING OF US ATTITUDES, PARTICULARLY IN THIS ELECTION YEAR. AS REPORTED SEPTTEL, JONATHAN MOORE'S TEMELY VISIT WAS MOST HELPFUL IN CHIPPING AWAY AT THIS PROBLEM. STOESEL

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